



MEDIA ADVISORY
Month XX, 2000

Contact: HCFA Regional Office
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

PUBLIC MEETING TO EXPLAIN CHANGES IN MEDICARE MANAGED CARE PLAN AVAILABILITY

[HCFA RO LOCATION] - [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN] is leaving Medicare as of December 31, 2000. To help Medicare beneficiaries in [CITY NAME] who are currently enrolled in this plan to better understand their health care choices and benefits, a public meeting will be held at [LOCATION] in [CITY NAME] on [DATE and TIME].

Representatives from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), the [STATE NAME] State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the [STATE NAME] Department of Insurance, the [STATE NAME] Department of Health and Human Services and [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN] will explain the options available to beneficiaries affected by [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN]'s decision to withdraw from Medicare.

A question and answer session will follow the presentations. Informational materials from other Medicare-related organizations such as the Part B carrier, the Part A fiscal intermediary, Medigap insurance companies and the local peer review organization will also be available.

When a managed care plan withdraws from the Medicare program, affected beneficiaries are still covered by the Medicare program. However, beneficiaries need to make a choice about how they receive their health care: the Original Medicare Plan (fee-for-service), a managed care plan, or a private fee-for-service plan, if one is available in the community [only refer to PFFS if it is available in your area]. The affected beneficiaries that choose the original Medicare plan will be entitled to buy "Medigap" policies without regard to pre-existing conditions.

Beneficiaries and their families who are unable to attend this forum can receive information on their benefits, choices and rights from the following sources:

All beneficiary households are being mailed the Medicare & You 2001 Handbook by the middle of October.

1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) English and Spanish speaking customer service representatives are available weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer questions about Medicare and Medicare health plan options as well as supplying additional resources, such as copies of the Handbook or local contact information (1-877-486-2048 is available for the hearing impaired).

A consumer-friendly web site, www.medicare.gov, features "Medicare and Medigap Compare," which allows viewers to compare Medicare health plan options at a county or zip code level and to learn about the Medigap options available to them.

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program in [STATE NAME] offers free and confidential one-on-one health insurance counseling and assistance. The [STATE NAME] SHIP office may be reached at [SHIP 1-800 number or phone number].



Advisory Alternative:

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[CITY NAME], [STATE NAME] Forum on [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN] Withdrawal

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

SPONSOR: Health Care Financing Administration

AGENDA: (Assign times for each item below after the meeting details have been set)

- Introduction to Medicare – HCFA
- Medigap options – [STATE NAME] Department of Insurance
- Medicare Financial Assistance Programs – [STATE NAME] Department of Health and Human Services
- Health Information and Counseling
- Information for [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN] enrollees - [NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN]
- Questions and Answers

BACKGROUND:

[NAME OF MANAGED CARE PLAN], a Medicare managed care plan, has decided not to renew its Medicare contract in XX [COUNTIES]. After December 31, 2000, [CITY NAME] residents will no longer have this Medicare managed care plan serving their community. Beneficiaries in this area now will return to the Original Medicare Plan (fee-for-service) or they may join another managed care plan or a private fee-for-service plan, if one is available in their community. Beneficiaries may have the right to buy a Medigap policy. The purpose of this forum is to explain this situation to affected beneficiaries and to notify them of their benefits, choices, and rights and to provide information resources for further assistance.

HCFA, the federal Medicare agency, contracts with Medicare + Choice plans on a yearly basis to provide Medicare-covered services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Managed care plans that decide to withdraw from the Medicare program must notify HCFA by July 3, 2000. These plans then may notify their Medicare enrollees in July.

All plans leaving Medicare on January 1, 2001 are required to send their Medicare members an information package by October 2, 2000 advising them of their options and who to contact for assistance.